

Thomas Jefferson to George Hammond, December 5, 1791, from the Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE BRITISH MINISTER J. MSS. (GEORGE HAMMOND)

Philadelphia, Dec. 5, 1791.

Sir, —Your favor of Nov. 30, remains still unanswered because the clerks are employed in copying some documents on the subject of the treaty of peace which I wish to exhibit to you with the answer.

In the mean time, as to that part of your letter which respects matters of commerce, the fear of misunderstanding it induces me to mention my idea of it and to ask if it be right. Where you are pleased to say that you are “authorised to communicate to this government his majesty's readiness to enter into a negotiation for establishing that intercourse [of Commerce] upon principles of reciprocal benefit,” I understand that you are not furnished with any commission or express powers to arrange a treaty with us, or to make any specific propositions on the subject of commerce; but only to assure us that his Britanic majesty is ready to concur with us in appointing persons, times and places for commencing such a negotiation. Be so good as to inform me if there be any misapprehension in this, as some steps on our part may be necessary in consequence of it.